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Diana T Fritz 05/24/2007 04:29:40 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

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Text:

UNCLASSIFIED

SIPDIS
TELEGRAM

April 16, 2003

To: No Action Addressee
Action: Unknown
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 1852 - ROUTINE)
TAGS: PREL, KPAO
Captions: None
Subject: GETTING THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE OUT: WINNING MINDS, BUT
NOT HEARTS
Ref: None

UNCLAS ABU DHABI 01852

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: PAO
INFO: DCM ECON AMB POL
Laser1:
ACTION: PAO

DISSEMINATION: PAO
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: DCM:RALBRIGHT
DRAFTED: PAO:TPONCE
CLEARED: PAO:KVANDEVATE, POL:STWILLIAMS

VZCZCADI534
RR RUEHC RUEHZM
DE RUEHAD #1852/01 1061250
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 161250Z APR 03
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9472
INFO RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 001852

SIPDIS

FOR NEA/PPD; NEA/ARP; PA; IIP/G/NESA; NEA/EX; NEA/RA

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: GETTING THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE OUT: WINNING
MINDS, BUT NOT HEARTS

REF: SECSTATE 96192

1. SUMMARY: TO GET THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE OUT, THE
ABU DHABI PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION ENGAGED KEY UAE MEDIA
ON MULTIPLE LEVELS PRIOR TO AND DURING THE WAR. PD
EFFORTS INCLUDED INTENSIVE TARGETED OUTREACH WITH KEY
PUBLIC DIPLOMACY MATERIALS, ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATIONS
WITH UAE NATIONALS, ARAB EXPATRIATES, AND LOCAL IRAQIS,
AND AMBASSADORIAL PRESS ROUNDTABLES. DUE TO WIDESPREAD
ARAB OPPOSITION TO THE WAR, SUCCESS IN BUILDING SUPPORT
FOR U.S. POLICY IN THE REGION WILL BE MEASURED BY WHAT
WE DO IN THE FUTURE: HOW WELL WE ARE ABLE TO HELP BUILD
A DEMOCRATIC IRAQ, MOVE THE PEACE PROCESS FORWARD, AND
WITHDRAW OUR TROOPS FROM THE REGION. WHILE GRAPHIC

IMAGES ON TELEVISION AND IN PRINT MEDIA HAVE STOKED ANTI-AMERICAN FEELINGS, WE BELIEVE THAT OUR COLLECTIVE PD EFFORTS HAVE NONETHELESS HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT ON OUR AUDIENCES. END SUMMARY.

12. FOR THE LAST MONTH AND MORE, THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION IN ABU DHABI ENGAGED KEY UAE MEDIA, ACADEMIC, AND GOVERNMENT INTERLOCUTORS IN A VARIETY OF MEANS, AND CONTINUES TO DO SO. THESE EFFORTS SUPPORTED OBJECTIVE VOICES IN THE DEBATE AND HELPED PRESENT MORE BALANCED REPORTING. THEY INCLUDED:

- AMBASSADORIAL PRESS ROUNDTABLES WITH UAE ELECTRONIC AND PRINT MEDIA IN ABU DHABI AND DUBAI, WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON THE ARAB SATELLITE MEDIA;
- INTENSIVE EFFORTS TO HELP ABU DHABI TV GET IMBEDDED WITH COALITION TROOPS AND GET ACCESS TO ACCURATE WAR FOOTAGE TO COUNTER AL-JAZEERA;
- A NEW EMAIL LISTSERV THROUGH WHICH PAS DISSEMINATED KEY POLICY STATEMENTS, POSITIVE PHOTOGRAPHS, WASHINGTON FILE ARTICLES, AND OTHER PD ITEMS TO IMPORTANT MEDIA, GOVERNMENT, AND ACADEMIC CONTACTS DAILY;
- AN SMS TEXT MESSAGING SERVICE THROUGH WHICH PAS NOTIFIED KEY CONTACTS OF ITEMS MENTIONED ABOVE;
- FREQUENT MEETINGS BY PAS STAFF WITH KEY JOURNALISTS, IRAQI AND ARAB EXPATRIATES, UAE NATIONALS, AND OTHER INTERLOCUTORS TO DISCUSS PUBLIC OPINION AND TO SOLICIT INPUT ON HOW TO SHAPE OUR MESSAGE;
- DAILY MEDIA REACTION REPORTING;
- DAILY IRAQ PD TASKFORCE REPORTING;
- PAS STAFF UPDATED EMBASSY WEBSITE DAILY WITH IMPORTANT POLICY STATEMENTS, KEY SPEECHES, IMPORTANT PD DOCUMENTS, AND POSITIVE PHOTOGRAPHS.
- PLANNING A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY ARMITAGE FOR AL-KHALEEJ ARABIC DAILY, THE MOST ANTI-AMERICAN UAE DAILY, SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 18.

13. THE CHALLENGES REMAIN MANY. FIRST, WE COMMEND THE IRAQ PD TASKFORCE AND STATE FOR TIMELY ASSISTANCE IN PROVIDING A WEALTH OF KEY PD MATERIALS. THE IRAQ PD TASKFORCE FOLLOWED UP SWIFTLY ON POST'S REQUESTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS WITH DOD, CENTCOM, AND USAID; THE TURN-AROUND WAS EXTRAORDINARY. TO FURTHER IMPROVE THIS EFFORT, WE RECOMMEND THAT KEY STATE OFFICIALS CONTINUE CURRENT PRESS OUTREACH EFFORTS WITH ARABIC TRANSLATIONS IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE FOR LOCAL MEDIA PLACEMENT. LIKEWISE, MORE ARABIC TRANSLATIONS ARE NEEDED THE SAME DAY OF IMPORTANT SPEECHES AND FOR IMPORTANT PD DOCUMENTS, SUCH AS MISINFORMATION/DISINFORMATION REPORTS, PHOTOGRAPH CAPTIONS, AND TALKING POINTS FOR POST PRINCIPALS. POSTS HAVE HAD TO TRANSLATE THESE LOCALLY, WITH INADEQUATE TIME AND STAFF.

14. IN THIS EMOTIONAL CLIMATE, SYMBOLIC IMAGES AND GESTURES TAKE ON EVEN MORE IMPORTANCE THAN USUAL. IMAGES OF THE RAISING OF AN AMERICAN FLAG, THE LOOTING OF THE BAGHDAD MUSEUM, OR THE BURNING OF THE PRINCIPAL IRAQI LIBRARIES ARE DEEPLY DISTURBING TO OUR AUDIENCES IN THE UAE. THEY PLAY INTO POPULAR FEARS THAT OUR TRUE AIM IS TO SUBJUGATE AND HUMILIATE THE ARABS AND DESTROY IRAQ'S NATIONAL IDENTITY. VISIBLE GESTURES SUCH AS THE PROMPT DISPATCH OF A TEAM OF ARCHAEOLOGISTS AND CONSERVATIONISTS TO IRAQ TO SALVAGE REMAINING ANTIQUITIES WOULD RESONATE WITH OUR AUDIENCES MORE THAN OFFICIAL STATEMENTS THAT WE ARE DOING ALL WE CAN. IN THE WORDS OF ONE IRAQI EXPATRIATE, "JUSTICE MUST BE SEEN TO BE DONE, NOT JUST DONE."

15. OUR SUCCESS IN GETTING THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE OUT SO FAR HAS BEEN LINKED TO THE EMOTIVE IMAGES UAE NATIONALS AND ARAB EXPATRIATES SEE THROUGH ARAB ELECTRONIC AND PRINT MEDIA. FOOTAGE OF DEAD OR WOUNDED IRAQI CIVILIANS AND DEMOLISHED PALESTINIAN HOMES GENERATED OUTRAGE AND REDUCED THE IMPACT OF OUR MESSAGE. DESPITE THIS, TARGETED PLACEMENT OF KEY PD ITEMS, ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION WITH KEY INTERLOCUTORS, AND AMBASSADORIAL OUTREACH HAVE ENSURED OUR VOICE WAS HEARD. ALTHOUGH EMOTIONS HERE WILL CONTINUE TO RISE AND FALL

TOGETHER WITH DEVELOPMENTS IN IRAQ AND ISRAEL, MORE
THOUGHTFUL MINDS ARE INCREASINGLY CONNECTING COALITION
ACTIONS TO BUILD A DEMOCRATIC IRAQ TO THE HOPE OF A
BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL IN THE REGION.

WAHBA